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FM AMEMBASSY DHAKA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5805  
INFO RUEHZN/ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE  
RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 7653  
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 7334  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 1000  
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 8418  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 8929  
RUEHGO/AMEMBASSY RANGOON 2442  
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

UNCLAS DHAKA 001142

SIPDIS

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S/ES-O/CMS,SCA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [AMGT](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [AMED](#) [KFLO](#) [AEMR](#) [BG](#)

SUBJECT: AVIAN INFLUENZA: SITUATION UPDATE MARCH 5

REF: A. A. STATE 219189

[1](#)B. B. NEW DELHI 01519 (AND PREVIOUS)

[1](#)C. C. DHAKA 006421

[1](#)1. Summary: An outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in India (Ref B) has eventual consequences for Bangladesh, although no tripwires have been crossed. Progress has been made at post in disseminating information to AmCits and Embassy personnel, as well as in increasing post's ability to shelter in place. Bangladesh remains woefully unprepared to identify an outbreak or treat symptoms, but forthcoming international assistance should help.

[1](#)2. On March 5, the Mission Avian Influenza working group met to discuss the preparedness stance at post and in-country. There have been several developments since the Ref C report. In a February 6 Town Hall meeting, the RMO briefed AmCits on the situation and on general health precautions. These points will also be made at an upcoming Town Hall meeting to be held during America Week in Chittagong. The RMO has also posted an article in the Mission-wide newsletter with general information on HPAI and MED guidance.

[1](#)3. Because of the limitations of host-country medical facilities (Ref C), the Medical Unit is active in its preparations to provide shelter-in-place care. They have conducted a survey of all personnel who have medical training, as well as those who would be willing to volunteer to provide care in the event of an outbreak. Motorpool has an ambulance vehicle that has been equipped with a generator and basic supplies. In the event of a pandemic influenza outbreak, this vehicle would be used by the Medical Unit to provide care to Mission personnel in their residences. Post is still awaiting shipments of Tamiflu and additional PPE from MED.

[1](#)4. The National Advisory Committee for Avian Influenza within the BDG has approved a plan that would cost nearly \$120 million to implement, and is seeking funding. USAID has pledged \$500,000 towards programs that will build the capacity of the BDG to conduct regular surveillance and to diagnose the disease in laboratories. ICDDR,B has submitted a proposal to USAID and others to upgrade its lab facilities to be able to test for HPAI viruses under proper bio-security conditions. The CDC representative at ICDDR,B continues to provide lab and other training to the BDG in each of its 64 districts.

[1](#)5. The Mission AI working group will continue to make

preparations according to MED guidance. The group will meet again next month, or as needed.  
CHAMMAS